

**Department of Commerce
Occupational Safety and Health Program
Report**



June 2005

**Department of Commerce
Office of Occupational Safety and Health
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room 5111
Washington, DC 20230**

Telephone (202) 482-4935

Executive Summary

The monthly Occupational Safety and Health report provides leaders and managers with an overview of the effectiveness of the Department's Occupational Safety and Health program. The report is based on the latest available data for the Department derived from employee compensation claims and measures the Department's progress towards meeting the goals of the White House Safety, Health, and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) initiative.

Work has begun on implementing a solution to using worker's compensation data in lieu of accident statistics based on accident reports submitted to bureau safety offices. Some data has been gathered for Calendar Year 2004. This data will be gathered by Calendar Year to meet the new accident reporting requirements outlined in 20 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 1904.

The cost of accidents as shown by Workers' Compensation Claims continues a downward trend and appears to be slowing in the mid \$14M range. Workers' Compensation Claim Data tell us that the monthly claim rate and the total recordable case incidence rate are down from the previous month and year respectively. In addition, the rate for May 2005 is down a great deal from the rate for May 2004.

The Department does not have access to SHARE data from the Department of Labor. However, the Department was doing better than required in three of the goals within SHARE. As soon as this data is published comparisons will be analyzed and included in the next monthly report.

The Office of Occupational Safety and Health will provide training to bureau collateral duty safety managers to prepare them to actively participate in preventing accidents from the causes identified in the monthly reports. To support that initiative, members of the Office of Occupational Safety and Health will assist bureau collateral duty safety managers in conducting inspections to identify hazards.

This month the health topic is Diabetes. The information provided covers how to prevent and treat Diabetes.

June Report

Purpose. To provide managers and leaders within the Department of Commerce with information about the effectiveness of the Department's Occupational Safety and Health program. This report is based on the latest available accident data for the Department derived from employee compensation claims. Wellness information is also provided to assist employees in preparing for the summer season. The Office of Occupational Safety and Health will publicize the hazards and recommendations in this report using the Department's web page. They will also work with bureau safety offices to further analyze the data and implement recommendations as appropriate for each bureau.

Discussion.

Accident Reporting. The Office of Occupational Safety and Health is in the process of reviving the accident reporting system for the Department. The accident log for Calendar Year 2004 has begun. This log will be maintained by calendar year in accordance with the new changes to 29 Code of Federal Regulation Part 1904 that changes federal agency reporting to coincide with the private sector reporting requirements. Calendar Year 2004 will be the base year for this data. The data is incomplete and a trend analysis can not be done for this month's report.

Worker's Compensation Claims Analysis. Workers' Compensation Claim Data tell us that the monthly claim rate and the total recordable case incidence rate are down from the previous month and year respectively. In addition, the rate for May 2005 at 1.18 is down a great deal from the rate for May 2004 which was 1.49. See figures 1 and 2 for the monthly and annual rates.

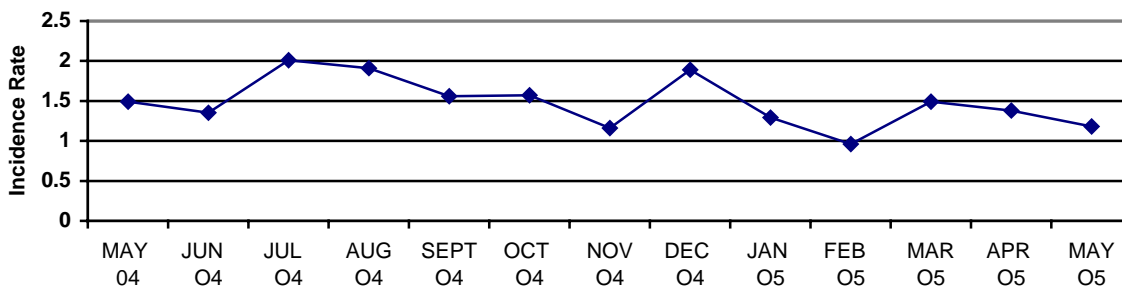


Figure 1. Monthly Total Recordable Workers' Compensation Case Incident Rate Trend

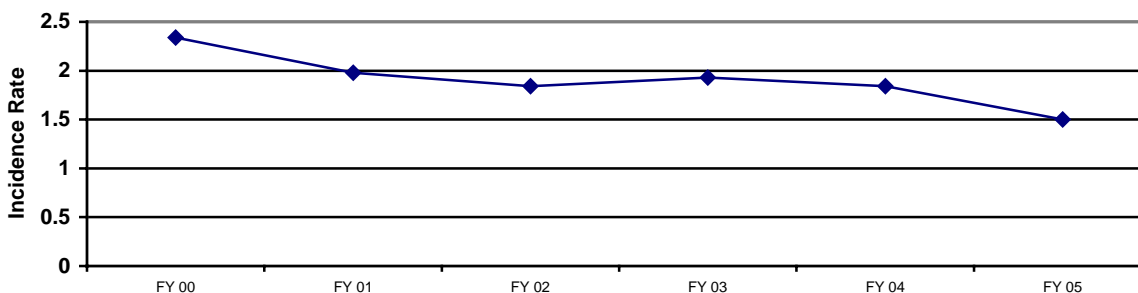


Figure 2. Total Workers' Compensation Case Incident Rate Trend

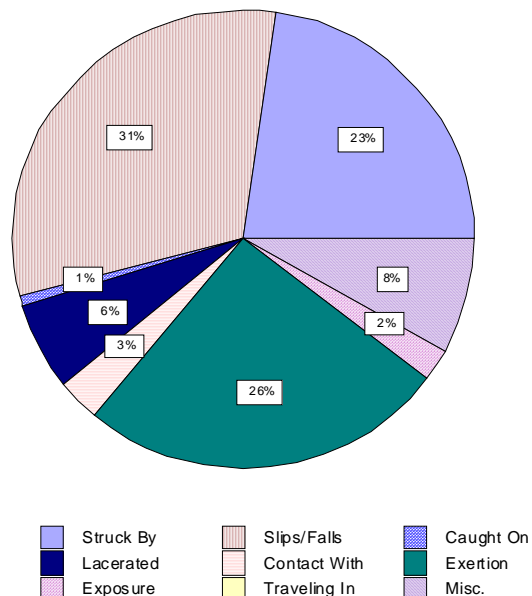


Figure 3. Workers' Compensation Claims by type for Fiscal Year 2005 to date.

The chart in Figure 3 shows virtually no change in the types of accidents that have occurred Fiscal Year 2005. The three main accident types that account for most of the accidents unfortunately are considered by safety and loss control professionals to be the most difficult to control and eliminate.

The predominate cause for slips and falls is uneven walking surfaces. However, spills on floors caused several slips and falls. Corrective measures to prevent further occurrence include:

The Office of Occupational Safety and Health has training for collateral duty safety managers to prepare them to better identify these types of hazards and to develop control measures to prevent them from causing injuries. Furthermore, the Office of Occupational Safety and Health will assist bureau safety managers in conducting inspections to identify these hazards.

Workers Compensation Claims Management Initiatives.

The Office of Occupational Safety and Health has analyzed the claims within the Office of the Secretary. As a result action is being taken for three of the claims to clarify the current status the employee and potentially return them to work. In addition, a cost break down was done to show what each office within the Office of the Secretary spends for claims based on the employees injured.

A spread sheet is being developed to list all claims; past, present, and future for the Department. This spreadsheet will include a cost breakdown to the line office level for each employee. Bureaus can use this information to charge back their organizations for the cost of claims. Additionally, this spreadsheet will be compared to the Social Security Administrations Death Roster to identify employees on periodic rolls that may have died.

The Office of Occupational Safety and Health is currently providing cost data to some bureau budget offices. An offer will be made to all bureau budget offices to provide them with claims cost information so that the costs can be budgeted for future years.

Department of Labor Initiative. On January 9, 2004, President Bush announced the Safety, Health and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) Initiative directing federal agencies to establish goals and track performance in four major areas. Federal agencies were charged with lowering workplace injury and illness case rates, lowering lost-time injury and illness case rates, improving timely reporting of injuries and illnesses, and reducing lost days resulting from work injuries and illnesses. The Department of Labor tracks the department performance. However, there is a problem with the data and the departments have not been told what their performance was.

Health and Wellness. The focus for health and wellness in this month will be on preventing and controlling diabetes. Diabetes is an autoimmune disease that involves problems with the hormone insulin. Normally, the pancreas (an organ behind the stomach) releases insulin to help the body store and use the sugar and fat from the food eaten. Diabetes occurs:

- When the pancreas does not produce any insulin,
- When the pancreas produces very little insulin, or
- When the body does not respond appropriately to insulin.

Over a period of time abnormal blood sugar levels may damage blood vessels and nerves. This may affect the eyes, heart, kidneys, legs, and feet. Diabetes physical and emotion symptoms include constant hunger, sudden thirst, dizziness, fatigue, cold hands/feet, depression, mood swings, and faintness.

To prevent Diabetes:

- Keep blood pressure at safe levels,
- Control blood cholesterol levels,
- Manage blood sugar,
- Manage weight, and
- Eat more vegetables and fruit and less items that contain sugar.

To control Diabetes includes:

- Follow all directions and take all medication as prescribed by your physician.
 - Manage blood sugar,
 - Take insulin as prescribed,
 - Lose excess weight, and

- Stay active.
- Manage blood sugar as directed by a physician.
 - Check before and after exercising.
 - Check at different times during the day, so to learn how different foods affect sugar level.
- Stay active. Regular exercise helps lower blood sugar and maintenance of a healthy weight. To keep active;
 - Talk to a physician about exercise goals.
 - Start slowly if new to exercising.
 - Choose enjoyable activities.
- Plan ahead for travel and special occasions that may alter meal schedules.
- Read the nutrition facts on food labels. These labels describe what is in canned, packaged and frozen foods. Use it to:
 - Compare items and decide which is the best.
 - Look for the total number of carbohydrates. This include starches, sugar, and fiber.
 - Figure out how many servings of a food stay within the number of calories, fat and carbohydrates desired.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Measure foods, keeping in mind portion sizes in restaurants are usually bigger than what one person need. Tips for eating out include.
 - Ask server about portion sizes when ordering.
 - Avoid the temptation to order more than necessary.
 - Choose half sandwiches and half salads.
 - Ask for dressing and sauces on the side.
 - Avoid “all-you-can-eat” places.

Future health and wellness topics will include:

July 2005 – Preventing sunburn and obesity

August 2005 – Preventing rape and successful smoking cessation

September 2005 – Health affects of Hypothermia and preventing colds and flu

October 2005 – Winter Cold and Flu Season

November 2005 – Dress to Stay Warm

December 2005 – Preventing alcohol abuse and drinking and driving.